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## IROQUOIS NOTES.

ALL the Iroquois were firm believers in witches, and their tales of these are many. The two following I had from Albert Cusick, recently ordained as deacon by Bishop Huntington, and who still resides among the Onondagas.

A man, whose brother was very sick, suspected the witches of causing his illness. He tried to find out who they were, and where they met, so he went to an old woman, and told her he wanted to be a witch. She said: "If you are very much in earnest you may be, but when you begin you must go to your sister and point at her. Then she will be taken sick, and after a time will die." So he went and told his sister, and they arranged a plan. She was to pretend to be ill after he came home, and let this be known.

When night came he started for the place of meeting with the old woman, but as he went he now and then broke off a leaf, or a bit of underbrush. All at once the old woman sprang into a tree and clung to it; and as she turned around she was a great panther, with sharp teeth, long claws, and glaring eyes. As she spit and snarled at him he was terribly frightened, but pretended not to be afraid. So she came down as an old woman again, and said: "Did n't I frighten you?" "Oh, no," he answered; "I was not a bit afraid. I would like to be like that myself." So they went on, and as they went he broke the brush here and there.

After a time they came to an open place in the woods, where were gathered many old men and women, and some young women, too. He was surprised at those he found there. There was a little kettle over a fire in the midst of the place. It was very small indeed, not larger than a teacup. Over it hung a bunch of snakes, from which blood dripped into the kettle, and of this all drank a little from time to time. He pretended to drink, and after that looked carefully about to see who were there. They did many things, and took many shapes, and frequently asked what he would like to be. He said: "A screech owl." So they gave him an owl's head, which he was to put on later. They told him when he had this on he would be able to fly like a bird. He imitated the owl's cries and movements, and they said he would be a boss witch. When he put on the head he seemed to lose control of himself, and it took him over the trees to his brother's house. At the same time the meeting broke up, and the witches went off in various shapes, as foxes, wolves, panthers, hawks, and owls.

When he came to his brother's, all in the house were scared at the noise of an owl on the roof, for he made sounds just like one. Then

he took off the head and went into the house. He pointed at a dog, instead of his sister, and the dog sickened and died. His sister pretended to be sick, as they had agreed, and the witches came to see her. They mourned for her, just as though they had not intended her death, and talked about her illness everywhere.

The next day the young man got the warriors together, and told what he had seen. They consulted, and armed themselves, agreeing to follow him that night. The band went through the bushes and trees, finding the way by the twigs and leaves he had broken. They knew the spot, which was on their reservation, and when they reached it the witches' meeting had begun. They had officers and speakers, and one of these was making a fine speech. He said if they killed any persons they would go to heaven, and the Great Spirit would reward the witches well. They might save their victims from much evil by killing them, for they might become bad or unfortunate. If they died now they would go to the Good Spirit. While he was speaking the young man gave a sign, and the warriors rushed in and killed all the witches.

The other story follows. An old woman lived with her grandson, but went away from home every night. There was a loft in her house, where she went every evening, but she would not let the boy go. He asked many times where she went, but she would not tell. When he seemed asleep she was off at once, and if he woke up when she returned, he heard curious sounds on the roof before she came in. Once, while she was away during the day, he thought he would find out what he could, and so he climbed into the loft. There was a hole in the roof, and in one corner of the loft there was a round chest of bark. In the bottom of this he found an owl's head. "Ah! this is very fine," said he. "These will make good feathers for a hat." So he put the owl's head on his head. At once he lost control of himself, and the head flew off with him. He did not know what would happen, but seemed and acted like an owl. Away he went, through the air, to a house where a sick woman lay, and flew all around it. A very crazy-acting owl was he, as any owl might have been in the sun. He tried to stop himself, but could not. He caught hold of sunflowers, but they came up by the roots. He caught hold of bushes, and they did the same. At last he flew into the house and fell among the ashes, where the frightened people caught him. They found nothing but a small boy and an owl's head. He told his story, and thus a witch was found out.

A little after the New Year the Onondaga witches are got rid of by a feast and ceremonies, instead of by the tomahawk, as in early times. The firing of guns helps greatly in this, but I do not think silver bullets are ever used. Sometimes the firing takes on a danger-

ous form. I need not go into this farther, but will allude to what David Cusick said in his history of the Six Nations. He tells of a man who "drew hair and worms from persons whom the witches had blown into their bodies. It was supposed that the Skaunvatohatihawk, or Nanticokes, in the south, first founded the witchcraft. Great pains were taken to procure the snakes and roots, which the stuff was made of, to poison the people. The witches formed into a secret society; they met in the night and consult on various subjects respecting their engagements; when a person become a member of their society he is forbidden to reveal any of their proceedings. The witches, in the night, could turn into foxes and wolves, and run very swift, attended with flashes of light. The witches sometimes turn into a turkey or big owl, and can fly very fast, and go from town to town, and blow hairs and worms into a person; if the witches are discovered by some person they turn into a stone or rotten log; in this situation they are entirely concealed. About fifty persons were indicted for being witches, and were burnt to death near the fort Onondaga, by order of the national committee." The Onondaga name for the Nanticokes is Skaun-yah-tah-te-ha-ne, "People over the water."

Albert Cusick tells me that the old Tuscaroras had a custom which they supposed would keep their teeth white and strong through life. A man caught a snake, and held it at length by its head and tail. Then he bit it through, all the way from the head to the tail, and this kept the teeth from decay. I think the Onondagas have a white man's dislike for these reptiles.

Mrs. Erminnie A. Smith tells the story of the turtle which was fat and lazy, and had a blister on its shoulders, under the shell, from walking in the hot sun. At last he threw off his shell, and after various transformations became a man. When an Onondaga now wishes to make fun of one of the Turtle clan, he says: "Oh, you are only a blister on the back." A Seneca, in making a speech on the Tuscarora Reservation in 1891, said: "I am a Turtle, and the Turtles never wash their necks." The clans are not called directly by their totem names. The Eels are "People of the rushes," and the Snipes are "Big Legs," or "People of the sand." In the account of the nine Iroquois clans, more than two hundred years ago, the same thing will be observed. Among Indian nations the Onondagas term the Cherokees, T'kwe<sup>n</sup>-tah-e-u-ha-ne, "People of a beautiful red color."

In Mrs. Smith's story of one of the pigmies he calls himself Goga-ah, "I am a little fellow." Cusick tells me the true meaning is "I am a story," or fable; that is, "The people will tell stories about me." The haunt of the Onondaga fairies is in a ravine just west of

Onondaga Valley. There is an exposed and precipitous bank of boulder clay where they delight to slide down. Some large stones project from this, and they like the bounce this sometimes gives them. They did not often appear to the Indians, but did many things for them. The Onondaga name, Che-kah-ha-wha, means "Small People."

The Indians were made by the Great Spirit, Sone-yah-tis-sa-ye, "The One that made us," and of red clay. This is why Indians are red. The white man was afterwards made of the foam of the ocean, and so is white. Ta-en-yah-wah-ke, the Holder of the Heavens, is a name used in religious ceremonies only at the White Dog Feast. In others the term Sone-yah-tis-sa-ye takes its place, and is often used by Christian Indians. Ha-wen-ne-yu, or God, "One that rules in all things," is commonly employed by the latter, and this name originated with the French missionaries.

The story of the ducks drying up a small lake by which Hiawatha stood is placed farther west by the Onondagas than in Mrs. Smith's version. They refer it to a dried-up pond among the Tully Lakes, a little south of their reservation, and this illustrates a common tendency to connect stories with places close at hand. In the same way that of the Stone Giant and his pointer, related by David Cusick as happening in Canada, is assigned by the Onondagas to one of the Green Lakes near them. They have three local legends, at least, of the Stone Giants.

A curious and pathetic incident is told in the Relation of 1670. Father Fremin had baptized a young Seneca woman, in 1669, who afterwards died. Her pagan mother was insensible to his consoling words, and said: "Thou dost not understand. She was a mistress here, and had at her command more than twenty slaves, who are still with me. She never knew what it was to go to the forest to bring wood, or to the river to draw water. She knew nothing about housekeeping." So her mother was troubled as to her lot in Paradise, as the first and only one of her family there. She wished the good father to instruct and baptize a slave who was sick, that she might follow her at death, and take care of her. Aside from the pathos of the story, it interested me as showing a luxurious phase of savage life to which we are not accustomed, but it led Albert Cusick to speak of a tradition told by the old people.

It does not seem probable that such a custom could ever have existed, but the account is this: A mother sometimes hid a child at birth, keeping it from all human eyes until maturity, that it might be preserved absolutely pure. If different families had thus kept a boy and girl, they were married, if possible, when of suitable age. They were termed Ta-neh-u-weh-too, "Hidden in the husks." If thus

covered in the husk, and kept from evil, they were capable of doing great good. Goodness has a prominent place in Iroquois esteem, and on this is founded a peculiar kind of chieftainship. This was obtained by good and benevolent works, and could not be taken away or inherited. They were "pine trees rooted in the sky." Though they had no successors, they sat in the Grand Council, and the practice still exists, some of these chiefs having been known to me.

Most writers follow Schoolcraft in supposing that the Oneida Stone, now in a cemetery at Utica, N. Y., is the true one, but from his own account there may have been several. It is believed by some of the nation that those who went to Green Bay took the traditional stone with them. A visitor at the Oneida Castle, in 1796, said that a chief "regarded the Oneida Stone as a proper emblem or representative of the divinity whom he worshipped. This stone we saw. It is of a rude, unwrought shape, rather inclining to cylindrical, and of more than a hundred pounds' weight. It bears no resemblance to any of the stones which are found in that country. From whence it was originally brought no one can tell. The tradition is that it *follows* the nation in their removals. From it the nation is derived, for Oneida signifies the *upright stone*. When it was set in the crotch of a tree the people were supposed *invincible*. It is now placed in an upright position on the earth, at the door of the old man's house. A stout man can carry this stone about forty or fifty rods without resting." Sir William Johnson said the Oneidas gave him, as their emblem, a stone in the crotch of a tree, and about the same time they thanked him for setting the Oneida Stone upright.

In early days reverence to remarkable stones was more common than at a later period. The stone heaps are well known. In going from Cayuga to Onondaga, in 1666, an Indian cast a stick upon two round stones, which were covered with symbols of superstition. He said, "Koue! askennon eskatongot!" Which means, "Hold! this is to pay my passage, in order that I may proceed with safety." On some stones tobacco was laid as an offering. Tobacco is still burned at Onondaga to procure rain, and is always acceptable to the Thunders and other inferior divinities. On Schoharie Creek, the heap on which the Indians cast stones gave name to the Stone Heap Patent. There were several of these piles in Columbia County, and others in Western New York.

I have alluded to the Stone Giants. One of these lived at Cardiff, a little south of the Onondaga Reservation. Once he was like other men, but became a glutton and cannibal, and increased in size. His skin also turned into hard scales, so that arrows would not penetrate it. Every day he came, caught an Onondaga, and ate him, so that the people were dismayed. At last they made a road through the

marsh, with a covered pitfall in it, and allowed the giant to chase them by this path. He fell into the pit and was killed. When the noted "Cardiff Giant" was exhumed, the Indians were sure it was the big stone man, their ancient foe. Jut-ne-yah-hoo is the Onondaga name for a single Stone Giant.

David Cusick gives the story in a different way in his quaint history. In a note he says that they learned to eat raw flesh, and made their skins hard by rolling in the sand. I have always regarded the story as relating to the mail-clad Europeans, especially as he adds that it was said that Sir William Johnson had a picture of the giant, possibly one of his knightly ancestors.

I quote the Tuscarora historian's account. "About this time a powerful tribe of the wilderness, called Ot-ne-yar-heh, that is Stonish Giants, overrun the country, and the warriors were immediately collected from several towns, and a severe combat took place, but the warriors were overpowered and the people fell at the mercy of the invaders, and the people were threatened with destruction, and the country was brought to subjection for many winters. As the people have been reduced so often they could not increase. The Stonish Giants were so ravenous that they devoured the people of almost every town in the country; but happily the Holder of the Heavens again visits the people, and he observes that the people were in distressed condition on the account of the enemy. With a stratagem he proceeds to banish their invaders, and he changes himself into a Giant, and combines the Stonish Giants, he introduces them to take the lead to destroy the people of the country: but a day's march they did not reach the fort Onondaga, where they intended to invade, and he ordered them to lay in a deep hollow during the night, and they would make attack on the following morning. At a dawn of the day, the Holder of the Heavens ascended upon the heights, and he overwhelms them by a mass of stones, and only one escaped to announce the dreadful fate." He adds: "The hollow it is said not far from Onondaga."

He gives another story of a Stone Giant and a hunter, placing it in Canada, while the Onondagas assign it to the curious Green Lake west of Jamesville. The story was given to me as now told among them. The Stone Giant chased the hunter into the ravine, where the steep rocks rise two hundred feet on three sides of the pond. In the steepest part there is a natural stairway, by which the hunter reached the top before the giant was at the base. He looked over the ledge to see what would be done. The giant came and gazed around. Not seeing the man, he took from his pouch something which looked like a finger, but was really a pointer made of bone. With this he could find anything he wished, and so was a

successful hunter. As he climbed the rocks, the man reached down and snatched away the pointer before the owner saw him. The giant piteously begged him to restore it, promising him good luck and long life for himself and friends, but the man ran off with it, and left him there, unable to find the way. His friends interceded, and told him to accept the giant's good offers, and not incur his enmity ; so they went and found him at the lake. He received his pointer again, promising to eat men no more, and good luck followed the man ever after.

The legend of the serpent and the Senecas, related by David Cusick, Hosmer, and others, was varied by Captain George of the Onondagas. The story always belongs to Canandaigua Lake, but he gave the snake but one head. A boy found it in the bushes, and it was so pretty with its stripes and spots that he took it home, keeping it in the house, and feeding it constantly, so that it became quite dependent on him. It grew very fast, and he made a bark inclosure for it. As it became still larger he placed it on the poles of the cabin overhead, and then had to hunt to get it food. When it was so large that the poles would not support it, it came down and lived out of doors. It became larger yet, and the warriors had to bring game for its increasing appetite. It took a whole deer for a single meal. Then it lay in a circle around the camp, its head and tail overlapping across the path. It began to eat the people themselves, as they sought to pass, and they tried to kill it, but in vain. When all had failed, a small boy said he could do this, but all laughed at him. He told his uncle to make him a bow of basswood, and a red willow arrow. "Ho! ho!" said the warriors, "what weak weapons are these!" The boy dipped the point of the arrow in a young woman's blood, and thus prepared went close to the serpent. He looked along its side awhile, and then said, "I think his heart is just there." He shot at it, but the arrow did not even go through the skin ; it only clung to the scales. Then it seemed alive, and began to twist and turn. Little by little it entered the skin, passed through the flesh, and at last reached the heart. The serpent was in distress, in great distress. He rolled down the hill into the lake, and swallowed a great deal of water, making the lake roll and foam in his agony. He vomited forth men, dead and alive, but at last became exhausted and died in the waves. Then the people were free from fear. There are some local questions connected with this which need not be now considered. David Cusick spreads the story over thirty years, leaving only a young warrior and his sister as survivors. A dream shows the warrior how he can succeed. There are many of these serpent stories.

*W. M. Beauchamp.*